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Letter dated 29 March 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On instructions from the Government of the Republic of Rwanda and as promised in my statement to the Security Council on 15 March 2000, I have the honour to transmit herewith some comments on the Security Council report contained in document S/2000/203 of 10 March 2000 (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex were circulated to members of the Security Council for their information and issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Joseph W. **Mutaboba**
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Annex

Comments on the report of the Panel of Experts on sanctions against UNITA

From the outset, I would like to reiterate the Government of Rwanda's support for Security Council resolutions in general and specifically those related to imposing sanctions on UNITA in the search for a lasting peace and security in the brotherly country of Angola.

We also wish to commend efforts made by Ambassador Robert Fowler of Canada and his team in their endeavour and welcome their report.

The Government of Rwanda wishes to express once again its willingness and commitment to collaborate fully with the Committee on sanctions as it has been doing so far. As requested in our letter of 8 March 2000 addressed to the Chairman of the Committee on sanctions against UNITA, the Government of Rwanda needs now and in the future credible information it can respond to. This will allow us immediately to be extra vigilant and tough on individuals who may clandestinely be dealing with UNITA. One thing is sure: to the best of our knowledge, there is no Rwandan official involved in the violation of sanctions and we need evidence to respond to in case allegations against Rwanda continue to be maintained in the report under consideration.

General comments

The report does not provide what is meant to make it credible, i.e., convincing evidence to corroborate allegations being made throughout the report. The majority of testimonies seem to come from UNITA deserters: this diminishes the level of credibility and impartiality in general. There is nothing else to expect, except their doing their best to say that they made a good choice to join the Angolan Government, but this does not necessarily mean that there is any credibility in their sayings.

The methodology used does not bear the scientific rigor such a work should be based on to make it authoritative in all senses. For instance: no mention of dates, exact places, people named in some cases and muted in other cases, etc.

We find it hard to believe the *rocambolesque* stories of paragraphs 15 to 20. They contain a mixture of companies individuals, and the name of a chief of State who has already died and about whom anything could be said. No other names are mentioned among Mobutu collaborators or Zairian companies that could have been contacted. The same is valid when simply mentioning Eastern Europe. All this methodology is questionable.

The list of UNITA representatives and their visits in countries accused of collaborating with them abroad does not give details of who is who, both in time and affiliation to people or institutions said to be their allies in the report.

The conclusion in paragraph 51 is pathetically poor in content. If UNITA is said to have weapons from the government troops and from outside, how come no mention is made of the origin of those weapons? Somebody somewhere is making money out of this arms business and for sure he is in Europe, in Northern America,

in Asia, not in technologically starved or starving Africa. The report should dare to expose the very origin of the problem: manufacturing for export and for destruction.

The report talks of alleged violations such as weapons and diamonds trafficking. It mentions the easy part of it, i.e., the buyer is guilty, who he bought from is innocent until proven guilty of selling. This is one of the big loopholes in the report. Producers of petroleum and petroleum products who sell and export do not appear in the network as much as alleged simple fuelling stations become described as big elephants. Nothing or little is said about the immediate vicinities of UNITA that break the sanctions but much is heard from far away ... as if nothing happened at home. Something is hidden here that the report does not dare to touch on ... to give the real dimension of the violations of United Nations sanctions against UNITA. If it is not fear, there is cover-up and this will not lead to targeted results.

Paragraph 11 sounds a false declaration. Indeed the Panel not only does not use information that has been confirmed or has been corroborated by more than one source, but seems to forge its own stories and interpretation.

The information provided detailing the role of transport is disturbing. There is a way of going beyond speculations about some individuals or company owners and finding out more about registering countries for instance.

Recommendations that something could be done with SADC member States are all right but too limiting in scope for actions that need to be taken almost worldwide if we collectively stand as one to make sanctions work.

Specific comments on allegations against Rwanda

We very much respect bodies set up by the Security Council but wish to question the unavoidable bias against Rwanda in this particular report compiled and written up in Harare by a panellist from Zimbabwe, assisted from the panel by Namibian and Angolan brothers and talking of Angola. In reading the report, it becomes clear that reference to Rwanda is simply mirrored in the optic of Rwanda versus the Democratic Republic of the Congo and it is a fact. We call this dubious independence of a report (paras. 1-6).

Some countries have been visited and Government officials contacted; nowhere in the report do the experts mention any contact with Rwandan officials and any outcome of their meetings.

Whatever has been alleged against Rwanda was never shared with our officials before, during, and/or after the report, thus leaving us guessing and hitting the roof to know who on earth the report is talking about. Neither the United Nations nor the Angolan Government has ever furnished Rwanda with identification information of UNITA agents, i.e., photographs of the people in question, possible code names they might be using, the passports they could be using, possible areas in which they commonly move and other descriptions that identified persons designing themselves. And all leads us to believe the Panel has those details.

Rwanda requested and agreed with Angola to have an office in Kigali that would among other bilateral issues help to coordinate and identify UNITA people or any other activities by any other persons in favour of UNITA but in vain. They only hired a house for that use and left it unoccupied for two years to date.

There has been no military cooperation with UNITA. The fact that Rwandan troops used the Angolan territory to successfully evacuate Rwandan troops did not necessarily mean a pact with Savimbi or UNITA. Angola knows how we evacuated our troops in a military rescue operation. None of our troops had set foot in Angola before and no Rwandan official ever had contact with Savimbi or any of his UNITA officials (paras. 25-26). Reference to Rwanda should be taken out.

On the issue of alleging that Rwanda left some of its troops with Savimbi, this is simply not true. We have however knowledge of renegade forces from Rwanda who were working with UNITA after the fall of Mobutu and this Angola knows since we have the information from them. Whether those forces left UNITA or not we do not know. Should they be with UNITA, for God's sake they (ex-FAR and Mobutu forces) should not be confused with our government forces.

Paragraphs 21 to 24. Representatives of these countries can speak for themselves but it is obvious that there have been no contacts between Rwanda and any of the countries mentioned in these UNITA affairs.

There are discrepancies, such as the one in paragraph 25, where they talk of Rwandan troops allegedly staying behind, and paragraph 46, where they talk of mercenaries and do not refer to those previously alluded to in paragraph 25; it is not simple forgetfulness but lack of evidence and veracity of facts to say that indeed Rwandan troops are there. The same is applicable in paragraph 67 where they talk of refuelling in Kigali without any similar reference in paragraph 69 where nothing is included in the conclusion on petroleum and petroleum products, thus making the reference in paragraph 67 malicious in itself. There are many more examples.

Reading paragraphs 70 to 74 we hope the Security Council will make its own appreciation, but Rwanda is still fully committed and ready to cooperate if and when fed with credible information.

Paragraph 82 mentions Burkina Faso, Zaire during the Mobutu era and Rwanda after 1998 because of the protection given to UNITA personnel by the authorities in those countries. There is no substance as far as Rwanda is concerned. The Panel of Experts owes the Security Council better investigations in the case of Rwanda instead of a simplistic "Mobutu versus Kabila factor" as to why Rwanda is alleged to be dealing with UNITA. Paragraph 83 does not elaborate either.

Paragraph 104 does not make sense. Since there is no evidence against those leaders, why at all mention their names? Take the case of Vice-President Kagame mentioned in paragraph 25. He has never seen or met Savimbi in his life. Kagame's name should be cleared and taken out of the report. This comes back to the point made earlier about biased reporting on Rwanda and its officials with fabricated allegations.

Same in paragraph 107, talking of how UNITA personnel travels, Rwanda is rightly not mentioned but on soft ground the report vaguely says that Rwanda facilitates meetings for UNITA personnel. This is a lazy way of thinking and concluding, just mentioning Rwanda for the sake of doing it or as if the author had orders to mention Rwanda.

Paragraphs 129 to 162, on UNITA representation and travel abroad. This information is also new to us. We are very much surprised to learn that there may be a UNITA representative at United Nations Headquarters when the Security Council

is deliberating on sanctioning UNITA. If this happens to be true, which category shall we put the United Nations in, in paragraph 155?

Rwanda has since started investigating the alleged movement of UNITA people in Kigali. All evidence available shows that no Rwandan officials have been involved and we look forward to getting more information from the Committee to be able to work on it further. Our immigration services have been alerted and will report to us and then to the Committee when and if anything comes up.

In conclusion, the Government of Rwanda stands firm to be supplied with credible information to continue carrying out its own investigations in order to get the Security Council resolutions on Angola and UNITA fully implemented, and reiterates its support to the Committee chaired by Ambassador Robert Fowler.

(*Signed*) Joseph W. **Mutaboba**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative